

SOCIALIST STUDIES

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**OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF
THE SOCIALIST PARTY
OF GREAT BRITAIN**

Communications to: General Secretary,
71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB

SOCIALISM NEEDS YOU! AND YOU NEED SOCIALISM!

The Problem

Without Socialists there can be no Socialist political organisation and no Socialism. The Socialist Party of Great Britain needs members in order to carry out Party work. We need writers, speakers and distributors of our journal, *Socialist Studies*, and other Party literature. We need committed Socialists who reject capitalism and accept the urgent need for a new society based upon production for direct social use, not for profit. And we need members who accept and will be prepared to defend the SPGB's Object and Declaration of Principles.

The Solution

The solution is simple. If you agree with our analysis of capitalism, the Socialist objective and the political means required to establish common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society, then you are already a Socialist. But individual Socialists cannot alone make a marked impact upon Capitalism. The struggle for Socialism has to be an organised one and this requires collective action by the working class.

This is why a Socialist political party is vitally important. It focuses attention on the class struggle and enables workers to act with unity and strength. If you are a Socialist then the first step is to join the Socialist Party of Great Britain. We are not a sect or a cult. There are no intellectuals in the Party, only intelligent men and women who share the same class interests, Socialist ideas and Socialist objective. However, we only want members who agree with the Socialist case and if you do agree with us then we want you as a member.

What Next?

If you agree with the Socialist case then the next step is to apply for membership. We have no leaders. No one will tell you what to do and to think. All we expect is political commitment and enthusiasm to work with other Socialists to achieve the establishment of Socialism. Joining the Socialist Party of Great Britain will be the single most important political decision you will make. One more Socialist is one less worker voting for capitalist parties like Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats. A Socialist party with a growing membership will make an increasing impact on the political class struggle. If you want a world without unemployment, exploitation, war, poverty, discomfort and inequality you should seriously consider joining us. **ALL ENQUIRIES AND APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP** to: The Socialist Party of Great Britain, 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road, London N12 8SB.

CHANGING THE WORLD

Political idealists were once again demonstrating in Prague during September against the three capitalist institutions: the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the World Trade Organisation. Predictably the media censured them. "*Luddites*", "*an empty, misconceived and futile gesture*", "*a travelling circus*", "*a ritual opportunity for the expression of a miscellany of mismatched protest*" and "*a vacuous opposition to capitalism*".

For **The Independent** (29 September 2000) the anti-capitalism demonstrators were naive. "*The world can be changed*", it declared "*only by people who get their hands dirty with policy detail and engage with the institutions that bring governments of the world together*".

This is disingenuous. Capitalism is uncritically taken for granted. The division of the world into competing capitalist states is uncritically accepted. And the imposition of economic policy by capitalist institutions within the framework of commodity production and exchange for profit is unquestioned.

On this argument, all people are allowed to do is to haggle over the detail. It is like having no control in the construction of a house but being allowed to choose the colour of the curtains. Rather than anything changing, nothing changes. **The Independent** raised the flag for the dark forces of conservatism. Their argument is pure reactionary cant.

Socialists are critical of the actions taken by the demonstrators who also unquestionably accept capitalism. They have achieved nothing. Capitalism is intact. So are the social problems caused by capitalism. The profit system still leaves millions in hunger, dying from disease and living in abject poverty. The protesters rage and frustration is misdirected. They are politically immature, theoretically incoherent and unaware of the social system they protest against with so much energy. A more sober disposition would help.

And this is where Socialists can offer some practical advice. To change the world requires three things. First, an understanding that capitalism cannot be reformed to work in the interests of all society. Second, the necessity of having something positive to put in its place. And third, the political means to achieve the Socialist object.

Capitalism is based on private property ownership by a privileged class who monopolise the world's resources and who only engage in production if there is profit to be made. Capitalists exploit the working class. And the employer's class privilege is protected by the machinery of government.

If we want a world that has no national boundaries, where production takes place to satisfy human need and where people can live worthwhile lives free from poverty then capitalism has to be replaced by the common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society. That is, the profit system must be replaced by Socialism.

The political means is simply to create a Socialist majority understanding and desiring Socialism. If all the wasted energy in Prague were used just to make a few thousand Socialists then that would have been positive action. There would be different editorials in the capitalist media. One thing the capitalist class and their agents fear above all else is Socialists and a strong Socialist movement. Political action has to be taken to secure the machinery of government to enable the smooth transformation of production for profit to be replaced by production for use. This is the only way to change the world. Socialist revolution.

"THE DICTATORSHIP OF THE PROLETARIAT"

The history of the Communist parties throughout the world is an unrelieved story of dictatorial organisations, having had at their head the absolute dictatorship of the Communist party in Russia. The dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the Communist party are two fundamentally different conditions. The former, which basically means conscious majority rule, never existed in Russia. With the present exception of the Chinese party, whose international ideology has had to give way to the building-up of state capitalism and the defence of national interests, all Communist parties were regarded as Trojan horses of Soviet capitalism. The fear of the more ignorant politicians was that if the Communists ever got power in the West they would emulate Lenin and never let it go. When the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917, Lenin shut down the Constituent Assembly and abolished free elections, set up censorship, and abolished other democratic rights enjoyed by workers. Had free elections been allowed shortly after the hollow victory of the revolution there was a real danger that the Bolsheviks might have been voted out of power, and Lenin was not prepared to risk it.

The conditions in a modern capitalist country are very different from those obtaining in Russia in 1917. The parliamentary system of government based on a democratic franchise means that property questions can be settled by a democratic vote. Generally the democratic system of election and an uncensored press, free trade unions, and the freedom of political parties to have their say, grows naturally out of the conditions of free trade. As Engels said, the bourgeois democratic republic is the natural state for capitalism.

Marx's Phrase

In May 1875 the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Germany, led by Bebel and Wilhelm Liebknecht, and the General Association of German Workers, founded by Lasalle, decided to unite under the name of the Socialist Workers'

Party of Germany. The unity congress was held at Gotha. Prior to the conference, a programme outlining the aims of the new organisation was sent to Marx for his criticism. In a letter to Bracke, a founder member of the Social Democratic Party, Marx criticised the Programme. It consisted of a number of vague, and in many cases ethical, propositions which could mean anything. The first proposal, "*Labour is the source of all wealth and all cultures*", Marx showed was incorrect, as it ignored the part played by nature.

In criticising the democratic section on "*The free basis of the State (government machine)*" he said: "*Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one with the other. Corresponding to this is also a political transition period in which the State can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*". (The letter was published by Engels in 1891, 15 years later.) This is the historic statement which Lenin seized upon as justifying the dictatorship in Russia and the failure of the Bolsheviks to solve the problems of production without which Socialism is impossible. The transformation between capitalist and communist society became twisted to mean a transition between Socialism and Communism. Socialism being a "*lower stage*" and Communism a "*higher stage*".

The elaborate falsification of Marx's theory was connived because the Russian revolution was represented to the world as a Socialist revolution, but Socialism was absent because the conditions for its establishment were absent. The historic revolutionary role of Lenin and the Bolsheviks was to build up a capitalist society in Russia, and they knew it, despite the fact that the Bolshevik party contained a number of Marxist thinkers. There was no other course open to them.

"The Transition Period"

Marx's phrase about the transformation between capitalism and communism could not apply, because capitalism had not developed in Russia. Moreover,

Marx was discussing the kind of action the workers ought to take after they had gained political power and Socialism had been established, and the State had become the agent of working-class emancipation instead of an instrument of oppression, and also what changes the form of the State would undergo in communist society. In Marx's view there could only be a scientific answer to that, and it was what the conference ought to be discussing: not the "*freeing of the State*" but its transformation within the new conditions of production which communism would bring forth. Earlier in his criticism, dealing with the section on the "*fair distribution of the proceeds of labour*", he said: "*What we have to deal with here is a Communist society, not as it has developed on its own foundations, but on the contrary, just as it emerges from capitalist society, which is thus in every respect economically, morally and intellectually, still stamped with the birthmark of the old society from whose womb it emerges*" (*Critique of the Gotha Programme*, p 16, Progress Publishers, Moscow).

Marx cannot be cited as an advocate of dictatorship. A few years earlier, in his book *The Civil War in France*, dealing with the Paris Commune, he wrote: "*The Commune was essentially a government of the working class: the result of the struggles of the producing class against the appropriating class, the political form under which the freedom of labour could be attained being at length revealed*". Engels, in his introduction to the work, said: "*Of late, the German Philistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the workers' Dictatorship of the Proletariat: well and good gentlemen, do you want to know what this Dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune, that was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat*" (*Civil War in France*, p 19, Martin Lawrence, 1933).

Those who know something of the brief history of the Commune will know that instead of the suspension of democracy, it was founded on its most thoroughgoing use. Dictatorship, in the final analysis, must come to mean a form of government by a single individual or of an organization over a great

mass. Both these forms are impossible in a Socialist society. The Socialist movement is not a minority movement, it is a movement consciously pushing the interests of the majority. This marks it off from all previous movements which were movements of minorities in the interests of minorities. This mass movement can only be organised on a democratic basis. Everyone will and *must* know what fundamental issues are involved, and what is expected of them. Participation requires understanding.

It should be borne in mind that Marx's criticism of the Gotha Programme was not meant for publication, and it was contained in letter form. Furthermore, it was addressed to Wilhelm Bracke and other founders of the Social Democratic Party to be sent to Bebel and Liebknecht, all of whom were men of long experience in the Socialist movement, and who were all familiar with Marx's ideas and writings. Their interpretation of what Marx meant would have been different from that of the ordinary layman. One thing is indisputable, and this is that the Communist party have no claim whatever to represent the work of Marx. They cannot abandon the Dictatorship of the Proletariat because they have never known the meaning of it, let alone accepted it.

Establishment of Socialism

We in the Socialist movement do not accept the idea of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat as a transitional period. We have no need to because class society will be abolished simultaneously with the establishment of common ownership. The State machine will be under the direct control of Society, and its repressive organs will be the first to be abolished. Other social and administrative functions, will be developed in accordance with prevailing social requirements. All forms of social reorganisation will be under the democratic control of the community. No political transition will be required because political society ends with the abolition of social classes. The political transition takes place before the eventual victory of the proletariat. Capitalist ideology has given way to Socialist ideology - the revolution is complete.

One of the difficulties facing Marx was that the Gotha Programme was not a Socialist programme, nor were the parties to it Socialist parties. However, these were all Marx had to work on, and he had to do the best he could, in all the circumstances. Experience has shown that a well-intentioned leadership with Socialist ideas is not sufficient to change society. The SPGB has learnt this lesson from history.

About Tony's Friends

A man is said to be known by the company he keeps. And this rule applies to Prime Ministers and other politicians, just as it does to others, like the man on the Clapham omnibus. Here are a few examples of those the Prime Minister feels comfortable with.

Putin someone Blair declares he "*feels comfortable*" with. His record? A former KGB spy; climbed the greasy pole in the corrupt St Petersburg administration; as Yeltsin's chosen successor, announced that Yeltsin and his notoriously corrupt family would not face any criminal investigation; and, in order to make sure of being elected, is widely thought by many Russians to have engineered the atrocities which were then used to justify the, still ongoing, slaughter in Chechnya and the flattening of its capital city, Grozny. And Blair "*feels comfortable*" with this man ...

Price Waterhouse Coopers, better known as accountants and auditors, were appointed by Blair as headhunters to get the 'right' people for the 'independent' Commission to select the 'right' people for the 'reformed' House of Lords. Their record? Among other matters, Price Waterhouse were the auditors of BCCI (the Bank of Credit and Commerce International) which collapsed, messily, in 1991 and which was involved in "*smelly businesses such as tax evasion, narcotics trafficking and money laundering*" (*Economist*, 15 April 1990). As auditors, Price Waterhouse regularly inspected BCCI's books and, for a fee, regularly reported that all was hunky dory. But then everyone has his price ...

Among others favoured by Blair and his gang, we find BNFL and Lockheed Martin. Both firms have a really rotten reputation for the way they manage safety at nuclear installations. Both have been chosen to run the MOD's nuclear weapons plant at Aldermaston

Not among Blair's friends or allies are Socialists - the real sort, that is. Blair and the Labour Party are as ever loyal servants of the British capitalist class. Those who work for world Socialism and an end to the class system would not receive or welcome an invitation to Downing Street. We are, perhaps, a bit choosy about the company we keep.

THE PRODUCTIVE FORCES

What has happened to civilised society when the very purpose for which it is organised cannot be achieved? That purpose is to produce and secure the means of livelihood for all members of that society. This has always been the aim of people throughout history. The way in which this was done, and the way in which people were related to their means of production, provides the key to the understanding of human progress. At every stage in the history of civilised society, that is society based on the division of labour, people organised in social classes have fought over the issue of which social class will dominate the source of society's wealth and the means of its production. It is only through this struggle that society has made the tremendous leaps forward in the building up of the productive forces at the disposal of society. This antagonism between the classes has produced chapters in history of bloody violence, cruelty and famine on a colossal scale, but without this class struggle the productive forces of society would never have been developed. By developed, we mean that the social organisation to produce wealth is equal to any normal social demand which may be made on that wealth.

Production in every sphere has eventually won the battle of science and technology. There need no longer be any natural or physical barriers to the production of wealth, yet there is a constant struggle for survival, and millions do not survive at all. The Oxfam organisation claims that millions of children die annually of diseases caused through malnutrition; the over-production of world dairy products persists.

"New Higher Relations"

The working class of all countries is the greatest productive force of all, but they are not aware of it. They regard the productive forces and the political and economic organisation of society as something beyond them in which they play no part. Their main preoccupation is with the wages system and the

constant fight against capital. This blinds them to the real state of social progress and the potential of production. In the real world, wealth is literally begging to be produced and consumed, whilst the world as the worker sees it consists of organised poverty and scarcity. This arises because of the way the economic structure of capitalism is organised. The working class is related to the means of production by wage-labour and capital, and these are basic conditions of production within capitalism, and no production can take place outside of these relations. These relations of production presuppose the existence of private property in the means of production in the first place, and the private ownership of the products in the second place. The products must be sold or exchanged under a monetary system and this constitutes a further relation of production.

The simple world of production where men reciprocate with nature and where wealth is produced is real enough, but its basic purpose has been obscured. Looking at this weird world of capital and commodities, we find that the productive forces do not exist to produce wealth at all: they exist to produce capital. That is, their function which is to provide the best existence which man can wrest from nature is subordinated and suppressed in the interests of the accumulation of capital. This accumulation can only be achieved by the sale of commodities, which is the economic form wealth takes under capitalism, and which contains within them that proportion of the unpaid social labour which is ultimately converted to capital. Provided there is a continual outlet for goods on world markets, the capitalist can continue to amass and reinvest capital. In the early years of capitalist development, particularly in Great Britain in the late 18th century, there was a market waiting to be served.

Society had just moved away from Feudalism with its restricted production and growing population. This gave a tremendous impetus to the development of the productive forces. New inventions and scientific discoveries revolutionised the productive process, but above all, the greatest productive force of all was human labour-power which became a commodity under the domination of

capital. The old conditions and relations of feudal production were swept aside by the new ruling capitalist class. Handicraft was replaced by manufacture, serfs were freed from the soil and forced to become wage labourers, merchants were permitted to employ wage-labour where they had previously been debarred. The restrictive practices imposed by the Guilds and Corporations regarding apprentices and journeymen, with fixed quotas of production and monopoly in distribution, were abolished. The rising capitalist class wanted unrestricted production. Therefore new relations of production had to be introduced. The relations of wage-labour and capital arose together with the establishment of private property in the means of production by the separation of the labourer from his means of production, which was mainly the land. The new system of production was vastly superior to feudal production, and the new relation of wage-labour and capital was consequently higher. Social progress, as measured in terms of production, was capitalism's contribution to mankind.

Contradictions

However, by the year 1825 the first major commercial crisis took place. The seemingly bottomless market had been saturated. Since then, crisis after crisis has taken place up to the present time with similar effects, and by their periodic return expose more and more the contradictions of capitalist society. The forces of production cannot comply with the laws and conditions governing their use. If commodities cannot be sold beyond a certain point, and a surplus accumulates, the productive forces cannot be allowed to produce beyond this point. Capitalist crises arise precisely because of over-production and a shrinking market.

There is a point of view which holds that capitalism can take crises in its stride on the hill and valley principle. It probably could, were production the only consideration and the capitalists were completely free agents. Unfortunately for the capitalist, capitalism is a political system as well as an economic one.

Politics involve people who, for the most part, are members of the working class. This is the class capitalism depends upon for its very existence. Whilst the ideal capitalist production arrangements would be to hire and fire, and displace labour by the introduction of machinery, the social and political consequences would be unpredictable. Workers would not accept without a struggle the loss of their livelihood through unemployment. As it is, capitalism is unable to use the available labour force, as world unemployment figures show. America, the largest capitalist country, has an unemployment figure of over 8 millions.

According to Marx, no society ever goes out of existence before all the productive forces for which there is room have been developed. The productive forces, which consist of labour, machinery, natural forces, electricity, steam, etc. and the earth itself, navigable rivers and other means of production, have been developed since 1825, the year of the first general crisis. What has happened since that period is that there has been a constant struggle between capital and labour over the introduction of labour-saving machinery. This amounts to the displacement of one productive force by another, and is not a development. Neither is the increased productivity of labour, which is an expansion of capital. Also the replacement of steam by electricity is not a development but the displacing of one motive power by another. Neither is it correct to claim that the introduction of up-to-date machinery is a development. Before up-to-date machinery can be introduced, existing machinery must be scrapped, which means that capital must be wasted.

Out of Control

The real way to consider the efficiency of the productive forces is by their technical and social capabilities: this is their ability to produce wealth in the concrete form - use value, irrespective of any market considerations. The social powers of production are related to the size of the population, but as the world population grows, the proportion of the population doing productive

work is becoming smaller. Every increase in the productivity of labour through introducing machinery, which arises mainly from competition between capitalists for market supremacy, will cheapen the products, but only by creating more of them. A constantly diminishing number of productive workers will support an increasing population. Capitalism however cannot physically remove its relative surplus population and has to find them employment outside the productive labour process. Thus we get hordes of civil servants, sales people, insurance people, advertising people, public relations people, office workers, and an ever-growing army of bureaucrats, lawyers, politicians, journalists, and soon. To bring this section of the population into useful production from whence they have been removed would undermine the whole productive and marketing process. There are no new markets, and neither did the development of the backward countries create new markets in the strict sense. Capital has been exported to the backward countries for over 200 years, and such development as is taking place is done at the expense, so to speak, of the old capitalist colonialists. It is not a development of the productive forces, which are world-wide not national. Competition between capitalists does not produce more surplus value. It moves it to the large capitalists.

Greater productivity is always given as the key to the prosperity of the working class, but greater productivity produces surpluses. Surpluses which cannot be sold result in the laying off of millions of workers, and the enforced idleness of large sections of the productive forces. Use value can be produced without exchange value, but you cannot have exchange value without use value. Without exchange value you cannot have surplus value, and therefore capital cannot be accumulated. The productive forces are subject to the property relations and the conditions of capitalist production, and these conditions inhibit their proper function, which is to serve society and not capital. The productive forces are fettered, and the powers of production are in rebellion against the conditions of production.

Capitalist society is like the sorcerer's apprentice who was unable to control the magic powers he has called up by the spells. When this point is reached, the forces of production have come into conflict with the social relations under which they have previously been developed. Social progress demands that there should be a change in the social relations. People must be related to their means of production without the restrictions of wage-labour and capital. The existing mode of production must be scrapped, and this can only be done by the introduction of a system of production based upon common ownership. Socialism. This is the highest form of industrial and economic relations which can be devised. This will be in line with the historical mission of the working class, and mankind will finally conquer the problem of poverty.

Revolutionary consciousness is the recognition that the social powers of production must be brought under social control. This can only be done by the working class using their political power to establish common ownership - Socialism.

Who Are the Dreamers?

Socialists are often derided by our opponents for being "*dreamers*". We throw back at them the following observation by Oscar Wilde;

Gilbert: *Yes; I am a dreamer. For a dreamer is one who can only find the way by moonlight, and his punishment is that he sees the dawn before the rest of the world.*

Ernest: *His punishment?*

Gilbert: *And his reward.*

(From Oscar Wilde: *Nothing Except My Genius*, p 35.)

MYTHS OF THE 20th CENTURY

Looking through a GCSE or A-level textbook on modern history written for 16-to-18 year olds we often come across one of the great myths of the 20th century.

The myth goes something like this.

Karl Marx set out a theory of Socialist revolution. It was adapted by Lenin to the conditions of 1917 Russia. The Bolsheviks, under the leadership of Lenin, established Socialism through Soviets and founded the first Marxist State. The, Bolsheviks, renamed the Communist Party, were led by a succession of leaders until the (failure of) economic system based on nationalisation failed and '*communist collapsed*' to be replaced by a political democracy similar to the US and Western Europe. Socialism - Communism, is dead political ideals. And the ideas of Marx totally discredited. There is now no practical alternative to Capitalism.

The trouble with myths like the one above is that if not exploded they have a tendency to become established 'fact'. Intellectuals within the universities had an uncritical love affair with the Bolsheviks, which portrayed Lenin's seizure of power as a 'popular uprising' and the Workers' Councils on Soviets as expressions of real working class revolutionary forums.

However, the above myth has a number of glaring inaccuracies conveniently glossed over in school textbooks.

First, the Bolsheviks did not establish the Socialist revolution. It was a coup d'etat. The Bolsheviks manipulated peasants and workers with the promise of "*Peace, Bread and Land*". The Karensky government was overthrown through conspiracy. And there was little or no understanding, let alone acceptance, of Socialist ideas by the working class. The working class of Russia in 1917 were

a minority of the population.

Second, Marx said that Socialism/Communism had to be the work of the working class. Workers had to take conscious political action. Lenin fundamentally departed from Marx. He said that workers were not cut out for Socialism. In fact, he said that they could only ever reach trade union consciousness (**What is to be Done?**). He also said that, left unaided, workers would take 1,000 years to establish Socialism (**Ten Days that Shook the World**, J Reed). He stated that Socialism could only be established by a dedicated group of professional revolutionaries drawn from the Russian intelligentsia. Men like himself.

Lenin was wrong. Not only did the Mensheviks like Martov (**The State and The Socialist Revolution**) repudiate him but so too did the Marxist, G. Plekhanov. Criticisms against Lenin's coup d'etat were also made by Rosa Luxemburg.

More importantly, so did the Socialist Party of Great Britain established in 1904. We applied Marx's materialist conception of history to Russia and concluded that an economically undeveloped country based largely on peasant production could not establish Socialism. We pointed out that minority action would not lead to Socialism but to failure or dictatorship. And we were proven right when Lenin was forced to introduce state capitalism and dictatorship by the Party over the rest of society. The SPGB also applied Marx's Labour Theory of Value to show that exploitation took place in Russia's nationalised industries.

The third myth is that Russia was Socialist/Communist. Production took place for trade; increasingly trade on the world market for profit. Workers were exploited in the production process and lived lives of subservience within the wages system. There was a coercive state machinery and independent trade unions were suppressed. There was never common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society.

Not that workers under a more private form of capitalism are having a better time of things. By all accounts life in Russia is hard, bleak and horrible. The infrastructure is collapsing fast; roads, bridges, railways, the electric power grid, oil pipelines, housing, stock are all exhausted and increasingly hazardous to health (**Independent on Sunday**, 24 September 2000). Electric power blackouts in several Russian regions in September have led to emergency shutdowns. For more than a decade, low birth rates and a sharp rise in early deaths have reduced the working-age population. Drugs, violence, alcoholism and prostitution are rife. According to the London-based European Children's Trust there is about 50 million children living in poverty in Eastern Europe and the old Soviet Union. Ten years on, following the collapse of state capitalism, the dream of a western style capitalism with its Utopia of frenzied consumption of commodities has proven a nightmare.

"Is this huge mass of people, numbering about 160,000,000 and spread over eight and a half millions of square miles, ready for Socialism? Are the hunters of the north, the struggling peasant proprietors of the south, the agricultural wage-slaves of the central provinces, and the industrial wage-slaves of the towns convinced of the necessity and equipped with the knowledge required for the establishment of the social ownership of the means of life? Unless a mental revolution such as the world has never seen before has taken place, or an economic change has occurred immensely more rapidly than history has ever recorded, the answer is 'No!'"

"What justification is there, then, for terming the upheaval in Russia a socialist revolution? None whatever beyond the fact that the leaders of the November movement claim to be Marxian socialists."

(The Revolution in Russia - Where it fails, The Socialist Standard August 1918)

WHERE ARE WE? AND WHERE ARE WE GOING?

A year into the new century, the UK and the US are still killing and maiming civilians in Iraq in a war that has been going on for nearly a decade. Two million children in Britain live in poverty. Millions of people are unemployed throughout the world. Like a disease, all the social problems of the 20th century have been passed on into the 21st century along with their cause: capitalism. Surely the case for Socialism is so compelling that a growing and vibrant Socialist movement should exist. Unfortunately, and regrettably, this isn't the case. Socialists are few and far between.

So, where are we as a class? And where are we going? A camera shot shows a large proportion of the working class with its head buried deep into a bucket of cultural swill filled with electronic noise, fashion accessories, pornography, commercial sport and the cult of celebrity. There is a penchant for violence, racism, xenophobia and a politics of blame, retribution and lynch mob terrorism. The picture shows a fragmented and bitterly divided class, easily led, holding a range of capitalist ideas and beliefs, and acting against its own interest. Through political immaturity, workers repeatedly sustain and legitimise capitalism by voting back in power capitalist politicians and capitalist governments.

The snap shot of the working class at the beginning of a new century is not a very flattering one. The photograph could easily be mistaken for an image of the "*Proles*" found in the pages of Orwell's novel, 1984.

Is this really the class which is to free itself from the wages system; the class that is to establish a framework of common ownership and democratic control of the means of production and distribution by all of society? And is this the class which is to become a free association of men and women, to flourish and develop in an open and co-operative society of equals?

Some would say the picture is so ugly it should be discarded and be replaced with students, intellectuals, black power groups, women, gays and animals. The working class, they argue, is not cut out for Socialism and will forever be chained to capital. Socialists would say that such a view is highly pessimistic, contemptuously cynical, and wrong.

As the historian, E P Thompson, wrote:

In investigating history we are not flicking through a series of "stills", each of which shows us a moment of social time transfixed into a single eternal pose; for each of these stills is not only a moment of being but also a moment of becoming ... Any historical moment is both the result of prior process and an index towards and the direction of its future flow (The Poverty of Theory, p 239, 1978).

Instead of gazing with impatient despair at the image of an eternal pose we should investigate the historical movement and development of the working class. In the process of historical development - a development which has not been smooth and uniform, the working class has slowly begun to move to become what Marx called a "*class for itself*".

After a process of two centuries or so the working class has become technically educated, socially co-operative in production, and competent to run capitalism from top to bottom although not in its own interest. The working class has established trade unions and been effective in securing higher wages and better working conditions. Politically it has established a Socialist party, acted on and developed Socialist ideas and democratic organisation in the knowledge that capitalism cannot be run in the interests of all society.

What should not be underplayed are the very real negative forces acting against working class development. Competition, money and commodity consumption are the values and defining features of the market that distort, corrupt and

alienate social relationships. Advertising promises fantasy worlds that are unattainable, leading to frustration and unfulfilled lives. The pressure of just living from day to day in capitalist society is almost overpowering. And politics is still covered in the dust created by the collapse of Labour's social reformism, on the one hand and the state capitalism of Lenin and his followers on the other. The reaction is an insidious and corrosive conservatism with its mantra "*There is no alternative*". The reaction is just at home in the "*Common Sense Revolution*" of the Tories as it is in the "*Third Way*" of New Labour.

Although the negative forces of conservatism and the alienation created by capitalism might temporarily act against and arrest the development of the working class, commodity production and exchange for profit still creates dissent, questions, a search for alternatives and an awareness of class, class interests and Socialist ideas. Capitalism still produces Socialists, otherwise this article would not be written, published and distributed.

It might be imperceptible but there is movement. The movement towards class-consciousness and political action cannot be held back indefinitely. Past achievements do not indicate the working class will stagnate into universal mediocrity and be bought off with a diet of bread and circus entertainment like the proletariat was in ancient Rome. The social problems created by capitalism are not going to go away. Capitalist politicians are not going to solve the pressing social problems of poverty, war and unemployment. Capitalism can never be made to run in the interests of all society.

There is a danger, though. And that is to concentrate on the working class as it is rather than in what it is becoming. The difference is one of looking at a static image rather than a real historical process. We must avoid at all costs the fatalism of the tramps in Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. Socialism will not come about without men and women making history.

However, there is no magic button to push and there is no short cut to Socialism waiting to be discovered. Becoming *a class for itself* requires political commitment, hard work, struggle and enthusiasm. The historical moment, as a process of becoming, still shows that future to be Socialism.

Political Necrophilia

Necrophilia is a gruesome perversion, a craving for corpses. On the Left there is a stench of political necrophilia in the air as various ill-assorted groups seek to make up to the Communist Party of Great Britain, while the Communist Party, rising like Dracula from its post-Soviet tomb, flounders about in desperate efforts to recover some legitimacy and even a life after death.

One such attempt - billed inaccurately as "*a weekend of Socialist debate*" - was hosted by Workers' Liberty and Solidarity. But it turned out that the real business of this "*Ideas for Freedom 2000*" gathering was to try to fix up an alliance between these groups and the CPGB. What these loyal Leninists and supine Stalinists would know of "*Ideas for Freedom*" is an utter mystery.

Although the Socialist Party of Great Britain's position should be well-known, we have also encountered Socialist Workers Party activists who tell us we should form an alliance with them. That way, they claim, the 'movement' would be stronger.

We disagree. The end result, with serious differences of policy and principle, would only mean endless factional disputes. Worse than that, the Socialist Party would lose its focus on the only issue of importance, the urgent need for Socialism, by being side-tracked into mere reformist campaigns on every issue except Socialism.

We have no intention of treating such opportunist, reformist and vanguardist groups as the SWP, the CPGB, etc with anything other than the contempt they have earned by their expedient compromises and anti-democratic tactics. If individual members of these groups are, as some claim to be, Socialists, they should support the SPGB whose sole aims is Socialism.

IRAQ: CONTINUING SLAUGHTER

Norman Lamont once claimed that unemployment was "*a price worth paying*" to beat inflation. Peter Hain, a Foreign Office minister, trying to justify ten years of sanctions and bombing of Iraq, used a similar - lesser of two evils - argument. He claimed that Saddam Hussein is such a villain, such a menace to all and sundry, that almost any means are justifiable.

Credulous critics have no answer to the question - how else do you propose that the international community prevents Saddam building up the weapons of mass murder? How do they propose to stop him using these weapons again on his own people - the Kurds, the Shias - or his neighbours?

Peter Hain, **The Independent**, 8 August 2000

Specifically, he cited Saddam's gassing 5,000 Kurds at Halabja (1988), and to his having "*started a war with Iran, which cost more than a million lives*".

What he did not mention was that the gassing at Halabja happened the same year that David Mellor, then a Foreign Office minister, went on an official visit to Saddam to urge him to buy more British "*weapons of mass murder*". From 1981 to the invasion of Kuwait in 1990, a series of British politicians courted Saddam, and the Halabja 'incident', as British officialdom preferred to call this act of genocide by nerve gas, did not stop the British government from continuing to encourage arms sales to Iraq.

In evidence to the Scott inquiry on the 'arms to Iraq' scandal, a former Foreign Office official, Mark Higson, described the F.O. view:

The Iraqi market, after the end of the Iran-Iraq war (August 1988) was summed up as being 'the big prize'. However distasteful we found the Iraqi regime, we could not afford to be left behind in developing trade links.

R Norton-Taylor, **Truth is a Difficult Concept**, 1995, p 59

Only weeks after Halabja, the Department of Trade granted £340m in export credits for arms sales to Iraq and, later that year, British trade with Iraq had risen, in just twelve months, from £2.9m to £31.5m (John Pilger, **Hidden Truths**, pp 125-6).

Hain's reference to the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war was equally dishonest. That was the war in which the British government backed Iraq, even after 1985 when Parliament and the public were told that British arms sales to Iraq had stopped. Even after Halabja (March 1988), the government again decided secretly to relax controls on these arms sales (December 1988) while pretending these controls were still in force as before. Two years later, after the supergun affair and the execution of the **Observer** journalist, Bazoft, an even more relaxed export policy was decided (19 July 1990) and, within weeks, Iraqi forces, armed with state-of-the-art, British-made '*weapons of mass murder*', invaded Kuwait (2 August 1990).

So, against the fact that Saddam was able to use these weapons against groups within Iraq and against neighbouring states, we should set the unpleasant fact that most of his armaments were enthusiastically and profitably supplied by British companies, with the full knowledge, complicity and approval of the British government. Moreover, since the Labour government continues to supply arms to Indonesia and other unsavoury regimes, the change of party in government has not meant a change of policy. The arms industry is still close to their 'ethical' hearts.

Hain claims that the continued bombing of Iraq is done in self-defence - "*our pilots take action only to defend themselves*" and to defend "*innocent victims on the ground*" (**Independent**, 8 August 2000). Not very plausible, given the large number of civilian casualties. Self-defence is always trotted out as the standard justification. John Pilger and others argue that, if Saddam was to be condemned for using poison gas, the American government should equally be charged for war crimes for their use of depleted uranium, cluster bombs and napalm (Pilger, **New Statesman**, 26 June 2000).

Peter Hain claimed: "*it is as important as ever to keep Saddam Hussein in his cage*" (**Independent**, 8 August 2000). But now, ten years after the Gulf War, Saddam the bogeyman, castigated as an evil genocidal tyrant, though once the favourite client of the British arms industry, is still in power. Clearly, that war solved no problems. It was not fought to protect Kurds or any opposition groups, or to promote democracy. Saddam's tyranny and torture continue as before, and Iraq, as an oil-exporting state, continues to be a potential threat to the commercial interests of other states.

The Gulf War, America's response to Saddam's invasion of Kuwait, was about the control of the price of oil on the world market. Iraq's policy threatened America's interest in keeping the world price at levels that suited American business interests. In our pamphlet, **War and Capitalism** (p 25), we cite evidence that the same concern over control of oil influenced American policy thirty years ago in continuing the Vietnam war, whatever the human cost.

The system has not changed since, way back in 1933, Fenner Brockway, a pacifist, argued that the causes of war lie in the struggle for markets and for economic dominance:

The struggle for markets is the underlying cause of the rivalries in the foreign policies of governments, and of the rivalries in armaments themselves. War and armaments have their roots in the economic system; and it is only by a fundamental change in the economic system that the Bloody Traffic will be ended.

F Brockway, **The Bloody Traffic**, 1933, p 286.

Wars and sanctions solve no problems. They create misery and resentment, the seedbed for future wars. The same dishonest arguments Hain puts to justify his government's continuing with sanctions and bombing would have been put by his Tory predecessors. As Pilger comments:

... the one, true, commitment of New Labour is the acquisition, manufacture and selling of the means of killing and maiming, and the pursuit of policies that, by other means, have a similar effect

New Statesman, 7 August 2000.

Pilger protests at the Orwellian lies and half-truths used by politicians to mislead the public and justify the unjustifiable. In his time Brockway was fully conscious of how the capitalist system is the real cause of the conditions which generate wars but he settled for the soft option, working within the Labour Party to reform capitalism.

It is surely high time that modern critics and anti-war protesters took the next step and realised the urgent need to end capitalism, not merely to reform it.

Boom and Bust

People who think you can get rid of capitalism's cycles are doomed to disappointment. Each time "good times" come along pundits and punters alike imagine this boom will last. But booms never do. Anxiously the **Economist** asked: "Emerging economies are enjoying a new boom. Might it lead to another future bust?". Obviously, yes.

All booms are cyclical. What goes up today will, sooner or later, come down. No amount of reforming the banking system or improving the 'international financial architecture' can alter this fact. And the so-called new, 'knowledge-based' economy is just as vulnerable and liable to ups and downs as the coal and steel, car-making and consumer goods sectors.

"Rosy prospects, forgotten dangers ... the bigger the boom, the crueller the crunch", warned the **Economist**, in apocalyptic tones (editorial, 15 April 2000).

True, capitalism is an unstable system, offering only insecurity. In spite of New Labour's claim to have tamed the "boom and bust" nature of the beast, governments cannot control capitalist trade cycles or engineer perpetual, guaranteed, full employment. They would if they could. But in the past they could not and there is no evidence to suggest they could in the future. Capitalism offers no guarantees.

ILLUSION OF AN EPOCH

During the 1930's George Orwell said that members of the British Communist Party had merely replaced a patriotic allegiance to Britain with one for the Soviet empire. For many British intellectuals Russia could do no wrong. It was a "*workers' paradise*".

So it was of some interest to watch the television programme **Tourists of the Revolution** (BBC2, 25 March 2000) about intellectuals and others who visited Russia in the 1930's and reported back the lie that it was a "*workers' Utopia*".

G B Shaw, the future Barbara Castle and the cartoonist, David Low, were all taken in. So was historian, Professor Christopher Hill, who still denies the repercussions of Stalin's forced collectivisation of the peasants and the subsequent famine and death of some several millions of people. Architects like Le Corbusier would praise the construction of buildings, which were already crumbling before they had been finished. Everywhere the lie was being told that Russia was Socialist. The Webbs ignored the show trials, part of a political programme of terror in which seven million were arrested and six million were killed or died in the Gulags. They came home to Britain full of public praise for the Russian dictatorship and confined their reservations to their private diaries.

The Socialist Party of Great Britain was never taken in by the lie that underpinned the Soviet empire. From Lenin's 1917 coup d'etat onwards the SPGB was opposed to the state capitalism of Russia and its anti-working class policies. We showed that Russia was not Socialist, that exploitation still took place and that the "*Marxism*" of the Bolsheviks was bogus.

The TV programme made the claim that it was not until 1976 that the lie about Russia was exposed by the researches of the French demographer, E Todd. These studies were collected together in his book, **The Final Collapse**. Todd

never visited the Soviet Union but he had observed in UN publications statistics showing the rising mortality rates of infants year in and year out before Soviet authorities stopped publishing them. These statistics indicated fundamental problems with levels of nutrition, the medical system, the organisation of the family. They also highlight the inability of Russian capitalism to keep much of the working class above what Marx called in *Capital* "a crippled state".

However, long before Mr Todd came on the scene, the Socialist Party of Great Britain had spent decades analysing the Soviet empire from the outside, showing that the Bolshevik dictatorship acted against the interests of the working class. Our analysis was based on Marx and his materialist conception of history.

Of our contribution to a critique of Russian state capitalism reference need only be made, among others, to our 1942 pamphlet, **Questions of the Day**. In the section on the Russian Dictatorship, we commented on the way in which the Russian state dealt with opposition by "*imprisonment, suppression, exile and death*" (p 65). We also pointed out that the Bolsheviks "*played a considerable part in helping other opponents of democracy - the Nazis - to power*" (p 66). And in the concluding section "*What of the Future*" we had this to say:

A Socialist movement will grow in Russia, but it will come from the workers, not from the Russian dictators. The revolutionary fervour, as in past revolutions, has a tendency to work itself out as time goes on. The revolutionisers of the beginning are followed by waves of more and more reactionary successors.

Neither in their views on the gaining of power, nor in their belief - now rapidly losing the hold it at first gained abroad - about the possibility of imposing Socialism by dictatorship, have the Bolsheviks added anything to

the knowledge possessed by Marx. Marx's words, from the 1867 preface to the First Edition of Volume I of "Capital" still remain unchallengeable:-

"One nation can and should learn from others. And even when society has got upon the right track for the discovery of the natural laws of its movement ... it can neither clear by bold leaps, nor remove by legal enactments, the obstacles offered by the successive phases of its normal development. But it can shorten and lessen the birth-pangs." (Swan Sonnenschein Edition, p xix)

The Bolshevik attempt to usher in Socialism by "legal enactments" and by "bold leaps" before the economic conditions were ripe, and before the mass of the population desired Socialism, has been a total failure. In course of time that failure will become obvious to the workers inside and outside Russia (p 66).

And indeed the failure of state capitalism did become obvious to the workers both inside and outside Russia. Workers saw through the lie. Intellectuals, though, never managed to get beyond *Leninist consciousness*.

Even after Russian state capitalism lost its gloss intellectuals would carry on supporting vile dictatorships. Chairman Mao had his Maoist sects in almost every European country. During the late 1960's London was littered with Maoist bookshops extolling the virtues of the Cultural Revolution, the thoughts of Chairman Mao and his **Little Red Book**. Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge had their supporters within the universities - the leadership had been trained in Paris by French academics drenched in the fashionable "*Structuralist*" theory of Louis Althusser (see **For Marx and Reading Capital**) - an observation made by E P Thompson in his book, **The Poverty of Theory**. And remember Albania under the unreconstructed Stalinist, Hoxha, whose radio station, Radio Tirana, was required listening for insomniacs? It too had supporters in the West.

The question the programme did not address is now that state capitalism has collapsed as a viable alternative to other forms of capitalism what have intellectuals left to do? What is, in fact, left of the Left? Socialists would suggest absolutely nothing.

What We Said

As soon as the Bolsheviks felt secure in the saddle they set about implementing their pledges; peace negotiations were set on foot with Germany and Russia withdrew from the war to get on with the internal struggle. This struggle was supposed to bring about the establishment of Socialism in Russia within a few short years, but the optimists had left the backwardness of industry and the people out of their reckoning. Then commenced the attempt to twist the Russian movement into the expression of the quintessence of Marxism, and the Soviet organisation as the form at last discovered under which the workers could work out their emancipation, a claim that is now in the museum of history along with the dictatorship of the working class.

The Communist Manifesto - and the last hundred years, SPGB
Pamphlet, 1948, p 34

HOLOCAUST DENIAL AND HISTORY DENIAL

Holocaust Denial ...

Historians are often biased and selective but David Irving's "*Holocaust denial*" was so offensive as to result in bitter attacks on his integrity, culminating in his, failed and costly, libel action.

He had specifically denied the existence of gas chambers at Auschwitz, in spite of a number of factual eye-witness accounts, eg by the assistant to the notorious Dr Mengele, Dr Miklos Nyiszli (*Auschwitz - A Doctor's Eye-Witness Account*, Granada, 1962). Yet Irving chose to disbelieve these accounts, effectively writing out of history the awful reality. Inevitably victims and those who care about honesty were outraged.

... and History Denial

But no historians, it seems, have been outraged by the fact that, for decades, the SPGB has been written out of history and reference books. Here are just a few examples.

- o **The Penguin Political Dictionary**, ed Walter Theimer, 1939.

Under the heading "*Socialism*", we learn that in Britain "*a small Marxist current is represented by the Independent Labour Party*". Moreover, in 1914 "*Socialists in all countries, with few exceptions, turned patriotic*". Wrong on both points.

- o **The Common People 1746-1946**, by G D H Cole and Raymond Postgate.

This has lots about the Social Democratic Federation and the ILP, and a brief account of how these joined forces in 1911 to form the British Socialist Party. Also, that the BSP in 1914 supported the war and in 1920 helped found the Communist Party. Something too about the tiny Socialist Labour Party - its IWW connections, its Red Clyde activity, and that in 1920 it, too, helped found the Communist Party. Also, some brief notes about the Socialist League and references to Guild Socialism and Christian Socialism.

But not a word about the Socialist Party of Great Britain and our opposition to the war in 1914 on class grounds. More than 750 pages and not a single reference to the existence of this party and its unique Socialist record.

- o **The Rise of the Labour Party 1880-1945**, by Paul Adelman (1986 (2nd edition)).

This has a fair bit about the SDF, including its brief involvement with the Labour Representation Committee, its change of name to the SDP, and its 1911 founding of the BSP.

"Indeed, new Socialist societies sprang up like mushrooms overnight during these pre-war years: The Socialist Labour Party had been formed by a group of dissident SDP members as early as 1903."

Yet again significantly not a word about the SPGB, founded in 1904, also by ex-SDP members and, unlike the SLP, still active. Very odd - or was it?

- o **The Labour Party - A Marxist History**, by Tony Cliff and Donny Gluckstein. 1996 (2nd edition).

An SWP publication and not unbiased. The index lists references to the SDF/SDP, Socialist League, the ILP/Socialist Review and the SWP. Also the CPGB, entryism.

and fascism - but not the class struggle and not the SPGB.

Not content to disregard the SPGB's existence, these SWP propagandists deliberately lie to their readers:

"In August 1914 ... internationalism was tested ... Resolve crumbled at the first challenge ... Only the ILP stood its ground to the end."

On another page, they write: *"Only the British Socialist Party, which affiliated to Labour in 1916 ... protested against the war on clear internationalist grounds."*

This is extremely odd, given that Cliff and Gluckstein are well aware of Labour's patriotic support for the war effort, including, from 1916, conscription.

We specifically pick these two points - the denial of our Party's existence, even of the date it was founded, plus the denial of this Party's unique, principled, internationalist and consistent opposition to the 1914 war. For Cliff and Gluckstein to mutilate the historic record as they do is to give their *"Marxist History"* a very bad smell. After all, class struggle requires an internationalist and principled opposition to capitalism's wars on grounds of class identity and class-consciousness.

How odd too that a *"Marxist History"* manages to leave out any reference at all to the oldest Marxist party in Britain.

Like all the rest, in denying the existence even of this party, they prove us to be, at least, potentially a danger and a threat to the system. What other reason or explanation could there be for our party being so consistently singled out for this *"denial"* treatment?

FROM E.COM TO NO.COM.

E-Commerce was to be the future. Economists called it the "*New Economy*". Not now. The bubble has burst. Gerard van Hamel-Platerink, an Internet analyst at Schroder Salomon Smith Barney, recently said:

"Investors are getting sick of hearing another hyped dot-com story. Almost every Internet IPO (initial public offering) last year is on a cash burn. Many have only got three or four quarters before they run out of money. When investors realise, they will pound the shares". (Times, September 2000).

However, with the collapse of boo.com, Net Imperative calling in the liquidators and a fall in e-commerce sales the future of electronic business looks to be as uncertain as any other capitalist enterprise.

Ironically, Ms Jackson, Chief Executive of Net Imperative, is an adviser to the Department of Trade and Industry's trade association and also acts as a consultant to start-up internet businesses.

A similar story exists in the United States. There are 30,000 e-businesses in the US alone. Economists believe these figures will be reduced to 6,000 by 2001 through bankruptcy and merger. Unemployment either in terrestrial or cyberspace industries is a reality workers cannot hide from. A US web site called *startupfailures.com* has just been set up to profit from failed e-commerce capitalists (*Times*, May 24 2000). **Industry Standard** magazine ran a cover article about the number of redundancy notices being handed out, and investment bankers are inundated with calls from Internet companies begging them to find a buyer.

The crisis in the e-commerce sector had been predicted. Cyberspace cannot hide from the laws governing the anarchy of capitalist production and exchange for profit. Sometime, somewhere in cyberspace a lot of sellers were

going to find unwilling buyers and investors beginning to panic at the realisation that they were not going to get any return on their capital.

Workers who believed they had a stake in this electronic gold rush should soberly appraise their own position within capitalism and the fact that it can never be run in their interests. Consider, for example, these two questions. Instead of e-commerce why not e-Socialism? And why cannot the Internet be used purely to meet people's needs? Surely a better proposition than e-dole.

Profit Before People

In **Socialist Studies No 34** we showed that in capitalism, where profit is put before people, train crashes would continue. At the time of the Paddington rail disaster we wrote:

"Until capitalism is abolished and replaced with Socialism, nightmares, like Paddington, will occur again and again and again".

The recent train crash at Hatfield with the loss of more lives has proven our forecast to be correct. Profit before people means profit before safety.

So once again we have the empty platitudes of Rail track executives and politicians after more deaths and injuries. The truth of the matter is that you cannot balance passengers, profit and safety. One consideration outweighs the others.

And in capitalism it is the profit motive that is the primary consideration, one that attracts investment and draws dividends. £5 million was the price of automatic train protection refused by Thames Trains a year before the Paddington crash. £7.5 million is the dividend paid to Thames Trains' shareholders in the last two years. Profit before people. This is the reality of capitalism.

LITERATURE AVAILABLE

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LECTURE SERIES 2001

We start a new year with a series that touch upon the fundamentals of the Socialist case. With the possibility of a General Election in May, we have left the April date as an open meeting, the subject to be announced in due course.

SUNDAY 21st January.
MARXISM TODAY AND SOCIALISM

Speaker: J. D'Arcy.

SUNDAY 4th February.
WHO WANTS TO BE A MILLIONAIRE

Speaker: T. D'Arcy.

SUNDAY 18th February.
WHY WE OPPOSE THE WELFARE STATE

Speaker: R. Lloyd.

SUNDAY 11th March.
WHEN, HOW AND WHY DID CAPITALISM BEGIN.

Speaker: C. Skelton.

SUNDAY 25th March. - To be announced
SUNDAY 8th April. - OPEN MEETING

Meetings commence 3 p.m.

MARCHMONT COMMUNITY CENTRE

62 Marchmont Street, London WC1.

(5 mins. Russell Square Tube Station).

- Questions and Discussion periods -

Socialism on the Web

The Socialist Party of Great Britain is currently constructing a web site at www.spgb.org.uk which will be completed early in the new year.

The e-mail address for the party is

Socialist Party of Great Britain enquiries@spgb.org.uk

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

NORTH WEST LONDON BRANCH

meets at 7.30 pm on the second Thursday in the month
at Abbey Community Centre, Belsize Road, London NW6.

Secretary C. May, 71 Ashbourne Court, Woodside Park Road,
London N12 8SB

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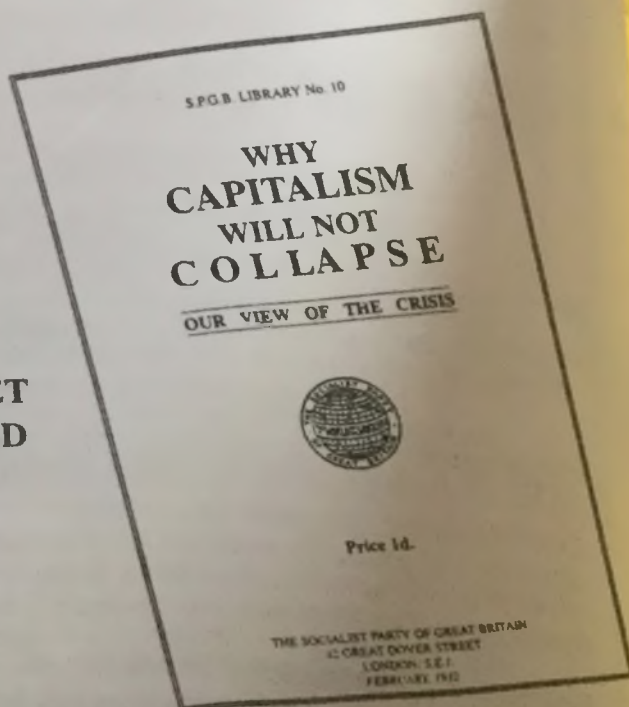
meets at 6 pm on the 4th Tuesday of month at
51 Argyle Street, London WC1 (5 mins Kings Cross Tube Station).

All meetings are open to the public and visitors are welcome.

Those wishing to find out more about the Party and its activities
should contact the Secretary.

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THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

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THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN

OBJECT

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF GREAT BRITAIN HOLDS:

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.
7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.
8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

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